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RUEHIC/ORG OF THE ISLAMIC CONF COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 0011
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 1162
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1672
RHFMISS/AFSOUTH NAPLES IT PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR TF FALCON PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEPGEA/CDR650THMIGP SHAPE BE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRISTINA 000178

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SUBJECT: KOSOVO EFFORTS TO SECURE RECOGNITION

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Classified By: Classified by Ambassador Tina S. Kaidanow for reasons 1.
4 (B) and (D).

11. (C) Summary: Since the initial rush of recognitions after its declaration of independence in February 2008, Kosovo has had to work intensively for each additional recognition, using all tools available to move the undecideds into the "yes" column. Support from the USG and other friendly nations has been critical to this success. The recent and most welcome recognition by Saudi Arabia has the potential to unlock a number of Arab and Muslim countries which have been waiting for this signal. The Government of Kosovo (GOK), led by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), is trying to take advantage of all opportunities to press its case with non-recognizing countries, but counter efforts by Serbia, Russia, Spain and others opposed to Kosovo's independence significantly hinder progress. Additionally, Kosovo officials are limited in their ability to travel because of non-recognition of Kosovo's travel documents. Consequently, much of the Foreign Minister's work is done at the United Nations, in Vienna, Brussels and other capitals with extensive representation from around the world. Hoping to capitalize on recent recognitions, the Foreign Minister and others will travel to New York, Vienna, Brussels and other capitals this spring to continue their lobbying. The Foreign Minister would also like to visit Saudi Arabia and Qatar to press for further recognitions in the Middle East and among Islamic states. End Summary.

Foreign Minister in the Lead

12. (SBU) With the establishment of Kosovo's MFA in June 2008, the effort to secure recognitions intensified, and the last four months have been quite active. Foreign Minister Skender Hyseni has been to New York twice, and to Washington, London, Strasbourg, Vienna and Prague at least once, among other capitals. In each location, the FM engaged extensively with representatives from non-recognizing countries, holding over sixty individual meetings. In Strasbourg, Hyseni met with EU parliamentarians from Spain, Greece, Slovak Republic and Romania, to make the case for Kosovo. In the UK, he gave a

speech at Chatham House and engaged with representatives from non-recognizing countries including a meeting with the Ambassador of the Arab League. The MFA also sent a letter worldwide to non-recognizing states, using the occasion of Kosovo's one year independence anniversary to urge further recognitions. The recent affirmation by Saudi Arabia has the potential to unlock a number of other Arab and Muslim countries, and Hyseni has reiterated his interest in visiting Riyadh in early June with the Saudi MFA, believing this will give a strong signal to other countries that the time to recognize is now.

No Missed Opportunities

13. (SBU) The Deputy Foreign Minister and all members of the Prime Minister's Cabinet have the task of maintaining active support for Kosovo and lobbying for recognition as a primary goal of each visit abroad. The Deputy FM has made several very effective trips to Berlin, Paris, Brussels and other capitals, where she has reminded those governments of their commitment to actively support Kosovo's independence. Recently, at a defense trade fair in Istanbul, the Defense Minister confirmed commitments for recognition by Qatar and Mauritania. All ten of Kosovo's Charges d'Affairs also have as their primary task lobbying their counterparts from non-recognizing countries on a weekly basis and reporting back regularly on their efforts.

14. (C) The Minister of Economy and Finance, Ahmet Shala, was recently in Washington for the Spring meetings of the IMF and World Bank, where he spent the majority of his time lobbying countries to vote for Kosovo's admission to the IMF. Shala is a particularly effective interlocutor, and he has

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established relationships with a number of his counterparts, engaging them at every opportunity -- at the airport, in hotel lobbies, and at the meeting of Executive Directors, as well as following up by phone contacts. A number of countries which have not yet recognized Kosovo's independence are expected to vote in favor of its admission to the IMF, suggesting they might look more favorably on recognition with the passage of time and Kosovo's continuing stability.

15. (C) The Government has also taken advantage of the travel abroad of the head of the Islamic Community and other religious figures to lobby extensively in the Muslim community. The MFA has also engaged with its Diaspora around the world, using this network to acquire (often highly accurate) information on the best targets for further meetings.

Visit Requests

16. (C) The MFA is currently pursuing opportunities to visit both recognizing and non-recognizing countries. Standing requests include: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE, Jordan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Yemen, Morocco, Uganda, Libya, Rwanda, Trinidad and Tobago, Ecuador, and Comoros. While the Foreign Minister is eager to visit these places personally, he is open to visits at any level. A universally complicating factor is non-recognition of Kosovo's travel documents. This is a major impediment in Kosovo's outreach efforts and imposes serious limitations on the travel of any Kosovar, official or otherwise.

17. (C) The Foreign Minister's next planned travel is to New York May 25-27, where he has requests for over 30 meetings pending, and he has expressed a strong interest in visiting Saudi Arabia and Qatar in the first weeks of June. The FM has one staff member devoted entirely to initiating and arranging his meeting requests, though he must often rely on the support of the Albanian Embassy in New York and in other places where Kosovo lacks robust representation. The support of the State Department and U.S. Embassies around the world is hugely appreciated by the MFA (and Embassy Pristina), and

would be welcome again, particularly with visits to the Middle East.

Comment

18. (C) The GOK has undertaken a broad approach to securing further recognitions, utilizing those opportunities afforded in New York and other accessible locales where Kosovo diplomats and government officials can ply their influence. With the recognition of Saudi Arabia, now may be the time to craft a more targeted effort, focusing particularly on the Middle East and those Islamic states sensitive to Saudi actions. The GOK would particularly like USG and other Western support in securing a visit to Saudi Arabia and Qatar in early June. In addition to the Middle East, Kosovo might benefit from the State Department's input and assistance with a targeted set of countries in Central America and the Caribbean, seeking perhaps to have a recognizing country like Panama organize a regional event to which Kosovo could be invited. A good opportunity to set something like this in motion will be the Foreign Minister's upcoming visit to New York. We would welcome the Department's views on where the GOK can best focus its energies and use that to help the MFA formulate a better delineated strategy for increasing recognitions. We would also look to the Department to support this strategy through our Embassies in the targeted regions.
KAIDANOW